

# Gavin Newsom

**Gavin Christopher Newsom** (born October 10, 1967) is an American politician and businessman who is the 40th governor of California, serving since January 2019. A member of the Democratic Party, he previously served as the 49th lieutenant governor of California from 2011 to 2019 and as the 42nd mayor of San Francisco from 2004 to 2011.

Newsom attended Redwood High School, and graduated from Santa Clara University. After graduation, he founded the PlumpJack wine store with family friend Gordon Getty as an investor. The PlumpJack Group grew to manage 23 businesses, including wineries, restaurants, and hotels. Newsom began his political career in 1996 when San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown appointed him to serve on the city's Parking and Traffic Commission. Brown appointed Newsom to fill a vacancy on the Board of Supervisors the following year, and Newsom was later elected to the Board in 1998, 2000, and 2002.

In 2003, at the age of 36, Newsom was elected the 42nd Mayor of San Francisco, becoming the city's youngest mayor in a century.<sup>[1]</sup> Newsom was re-elected in 2007 with 72 percent of the vote.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

Newsom was elected Lieutenant Governor of California in 2010 and was re-elected in 2014.<sup>[4]</sup>

In February 2015, Newsom announced his candidacy for Governor of California in the 2018 election.<sup>[5]</sup> On June 5, 2018, he finished in the top two of the non-partisan blanket primary.<sup>[6]</sup> Newsom defeated Republican John H. Cox in the general election on November 6.

Newsom hosted *The Gavin Newsom Show* on Current TV and wrote the 2013 book *Citizenville*.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Contents

[Early life, family, and education](#)

[Business career](#)

[Early political career](#)

[Mayor of San Francisco](#)

[2003 election](#)

### Gavin Newsom



#### 40th Governor of California

**Incumbent**

**Assumed office**

January 7, 2019

**Lieutenant** [Eleni Kounalakis](#)

**Preceded by** [Jerry Brown](#)

#### 49th Lieutenant Governor of California

**In office**

January 10, 2011 – January 7, 2019

**Governor** [Jerry Brown](#)

**Preceded by** [Abel Maldonado](#)

**Succeeded by** [Eleni Kounalakis](#)

#### 42nd Mayor of San Francisco

**In office**

January 8, 2004 – January 10, 2011

**Preceded by** [Willie Brown](#)

**Succeeded by** [Ed Lee](#)

**Member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors from the 2nd district**



for him to write, spell, read and work with numbers.<sup>[10]</sup> Throughout his schooling, Newsom had to rely on a combination of audiobooks, informal verbal instruction, and digests, and to this day, Newsom prefers to interpret documents and reports through audio.<sup>[11]</sup>

He attended third through fifth grades at Notre Dame des Victoires, where he was placed in remedial reading classes. In high school, Newsom played basketball and baseball and graduated from Redwood High School in 1985. Newsom was a shooting guard in basketball and an outfielder in baseball. His skills placed him on the cover of the *Marin Independent Journal*.<sup>[12]</sup>

Tessa Newsom worked three jobs to support Gavin and his sister Hilary Newsom Callan, who is the president of the PlumpJack Group, named after the opera *Plump Jack* composed by family friend Gordon Getty. In an interview with *The San Francisco Chronicle*, his sister recalled Christmas holidays when their mother told them there wouldn't be any gifts.<sup>[12]</sup> Tessa opened their home to foster children, instilling in Newsom the importance of public service.<sup>[12][13]</sup> His father's finances were strapped in part because of his tendency to give away his earnings.<sup>[13]</sup> Newsom worked several jobs in high school to help support his family.<sup>[2]</sup>

Newsom attended Santa Clara University on a partial baseball scholarship, where he graduated in 1989 with a B.S. in political science. Newsom was a left-handed pitcher for Santa Clara, but he threw his arm out after two years and hasn't thrown a baseball since.<sup>[14]</sup> He lived in the Alameda Apartments, which he later compared to living in a hotel. He later reflected on his education fondly, crediting the Jesuit approach of Santa Clara that he said has helped him become an independent thinker who questions orthodoxy. While in school, Newsom spent a semester studying abroad in Rome.<sup>[15]</sup>

Newsom's aunt was married to Ron Pelosi, the brother-in-law of Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Business career

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On May 14, 1991, Newsom and his investors created the company PlumpJack Associates L.P. In 1992, the group started the PlumpJack Winery with the financial help<sup>[16]</sup> of his family friend Gordon Getty. PlumpJack was the name of an opera written by Getty, who invested in 10 of Newsom's 11 businesses.<sup>[10]</sup> Getty told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that he treated Newsom like a son and invested in his first business venture because of that relationship. According to Getty, later business investments were because of "the success of the first".<sup>[10]</sup>

One of Newsom's early interactions with government occurred when Newsom resisted the San Francisco Health Department requirement to install a sink at his PlumpJack wine store. The Health Department argued that wine was a food and required the store to install a \$27,000 sink in the carpeted wine shop on the grounds that the shop needed the sink for a mop. When Newsom was later appointed supervisor, he told the *San Francisco Examiner*: "That's the kind of bureaucratic malaise I'm going to be working through."<sup>[14]</sup>

The business grew to an enterprise with more than 700 employees.<sup>[12]</sup> The PlumpJack Cafe Partners L.P. opened the PlumpJack Café, also on Fillmore Street, in 1993. Between 1993 and 2000, Newsom and his investors opened several other businesses that included the PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn with a PlumpJack Café (1994), a winery in Napa Valley (1995), the Balboa Café Bar and Grill (1995), the PlumpJack Development Fund L.P. (1996), the MatrixFillmore Bar (1998), PlumpJack Wines shop Noe Valley branch (1999), PlumpJackSport retail clothing (2000), and a second Balboa Café at Squaw Valley (2000).<sup>[10]</sup> Newsom's investments included five restaurants and two retail clothing stores.<sup>[12]</sup> Newsom's

annual income was greater than \$429,000 from 1996 to 2001.<sup>[10]</sup> In 2002, his business holdings were valued at more than \$6.9 million.<sup>[12]</sup> Newsom gave a monthly \$50 gift certificate to PlumpJack employees whose business ideas failed, because in his view, "There can be no success without failure."<sup>[14]</sup>

Newsom sold his share of his San Francisco businesses when he became mayor in 2004. He maintained his ownership in the PlumpJack companies outside San Francisco that included the PlumpJack Winery in Oakville, California, new PlumpJack-owned Cade Winery in Angwin, California, and the PlumpJack Squaw Valley Inn. He is currently the president in absentia of Airelle Wines Inc., which is connected to the PlumpJack Winery in Napa County. Newsom earned between \$141,000 and \$251,000 in 2007 from his business interests.<sup>[17]</sup> In February 2006, he paid \$2,350,000 for his residence in the Russian Hill neighborhood, which he put on the market in April 2009, for \$3,000,000.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Early political career



Newsom in 1999

Newsom's first political experience came when he volunteered for Willie Brown's successful campaign for mayor in 1995. Newsom hosted a private fundraiser at his PlumpJack Café.<sup>[10]</sup> In 1996, Brown appointed Newsom to a vacant seat on the Parking and Traffic Commission, and he was later elected president of the commission. In 1997, Brown appointed him to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors seat vacated by Kevin Shelley. At the time, he became the youngest member of San Francisco's board of supervisors.<sup>[19][20][21]</sup>

Newsom was sworn in by his father and pledged to bring his business experience to the board.<sup>[20]</sup> Brown called Newsom "part of the future generation of leaders of this great city".<sup>[20]</sup> Newsom described himself as a "social liberal and a fiscal watchdog".<sup>[20][21]</sup> He was subsequently elected to a full four-year term to the board in 1998. In 1999, San Francisco's voters chose to exchange at-large elections to the board for the previous district system, and Newsom was re-elected in 2000 and in 2002 to represent the second district,

which includes the Pacific Heights, Marina, Cow Hollow, Sea Cliff, and Laurel Heights, which had the highest income level and the highest Republican registration in San Francisco.<sup>[22]</sup> In 2000, Newsom paid \$500 to the San Francisco Republican Party to be on the party's endorsement slate. He faced no opposition in his 2002 re-election.

As a San Francisco Supervisor, Newsom gained public attention for his role in advocating reform of the city's Municipal Railway ("Muni").<sup>[23]</sup> He was one of two supervisors endorsed by Rescue Muni, a transit riders group, in his 1998 re-election. He sponsored Proposition B to require Muni and other city departments to develop detailed customer service plans.<sup>[10][24]</sup> The measure passed with 56.6% of the vote.<sup>[25]</sup> Newsom sponsored a ballot measure from Rescue Muni; a version of the measure was approved by voters in November 1999.<sup>[23]</sup>



Newsom at a political event in the Napa Valley in 2019



He also supported allowing restaurants to serve alcohol at their outdoor tables, banning tobacco advertisements visible from the streets, stiffer penalties for landlords, and a resolution, which was defeated, to commend Colin Powell for raising money for youth programs.<sup>[23]</sup> Newsom's support for business interests at times strained his relationship with labor leaders.<sup>[23]</sup>

During Newsom's time as supervisor, he supported housing projects through public–private partnerships to increase home ownership and affordable housing in San Francisco.<sup>[26]</sup> He supported HOPE, a failed local ballot measure that would have allowed an increased condo-conversion rate if a certain percentage of tenants within a building were buying their units. As a candidate for mayor, he supported building 10,000 new housing units to create 15,000 new construction jobs.<sup>[26]</sup>

As supervisor, Newsom had as his centerpiece a voter initiative called Care Not Cash (Measure N), which offered care, supportive housing, drug treatment, and help from behavioral health specialists for the homeless in lieu of direct cash aid from the state's general assistance program.<sup>[26]</sup> Many homeless rights advocates protested against the initiative.<sup>[27][28]</sup> The successfully-passed ballot measure raised his political profile and provided the volunteers, donors, and campaign staff that helped make him a leading contender for the mayorship in 2003.<sup>[10][29][30]</sup>

## Mayor of San Francisco

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### 2003 election

Newsom placed first in the November 4, 2003, general election in a nine-person field. Newsom received 41.9 percent of the vote to Green Party candidate Matt Gonzalez's 19.6 in the first round of balloting, but he faced a closer race in the December 9 run-off when many of the city's progressive groups coalesced around Gonzalez.<sup>[29]</sup> The race was partisan with attacks against Gonzalez for his support of Ralph Nader in the 2000 presidential election, and attacks against Newsom for contributing \$500 to a Republican slate mailer in 2000 that endorsed issues Newsom supported.<sup>[31][32]</sup> Democratic leadership felt that they needed to reinforce San Francisco as a Democratic stronghold after losing the 2000 presidential election and the 2003 recall election to Arnold Schwarzenegger.<sup>[32]</sup> National figures from the Democratic Party, including Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and Jesse Jackson, campaigned on Newsom's behalf.<sup>[32][33]</sup> Five supervisors endorsed Gonzalez, while Newsom received the endorsement of Willie Brown.<sup>[29][30]</sup>

Newsom won the run-off race, capturing 53 percent of the vote to Gonzalez's 47 percent and winning by 11,000 votes.<sup>[29]</sup> He ran as a business-friendly centrist Democrat and a moderate in San Francisco politics; some of his opponents called him conservative.<sup>[29][32]</sup> Newsom claimed he was a centrist in the Dianne Feinstein mold.<sup>[26][34]</sup> He ran on the slogan "great cities, great ideas", and presented over 21 policy papers.<sup>[30]</sup> He pledged to continue working on San Francisco's homelessness issue.<sup>[29]</sup>

Newsom was sworn in as mayor on January 3, 2004. He called for unity among the city's political factions, and promised to address the issues of public schools, potholes, and affordable housing.<sup>[35]</sup> Newsom said he was "a different kind of leader" who "isn't afraid to solve even the toughest problems".<sup>[36]</sup>

### 2007 election

San Francisco's progressive community attempted to find a candidate to run a strong campaign against Newsom. Supervisors Ross Mirkarimi and Chris Daly considered running against Newsom, but both declined. Matt Gonzalez also decided not to challenge Newsom.<sup>[37]</sup>

When the August 10, 2007, filing deadline passed, the discussion around San Francisco shifted to talk about Newsom's second term. He was challenged in the election by 13 candidates that included George Davis, a nudist activist, and Michael Powers, owner of the Power Exchange sex club.<sup>[38]</sup> Conservative former supervisor Tony Hall withdrew by early September due to lack of support.<sup>[39]</sup>

The *San Francisco Chronicle* declared in August 2007 that Newsom faced no "serious threat to his re-election bid", having raised \$1.6 million for his re-election campaign by early August.<sup>[40]</sup> He won re-election on November 6, 2007 with over 72% of the vote.<sup>[3]</sup> Upon taking office for a second term, Newsom promised to focus on the environment, homelessness, health care, education, housing, and rebuilding San Francisco General Hospital.<sup>[41][42]</sup>

## Mayoralty

As mayor, Newsom focused on development projects in Hunters Point and Treasure Island.

In 2004, he gained national attention when he directed the San Francisco city-county clerk to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, in violation of the state law passed in 2000.<sup>[43]</sup>

Implementation of Care Not Cash, the initiative he had sponsored as a Supervisor, began on July 1, 2004. As part of it, 5,000 more homeless people were given permanent shelter in the city. By 2007, about 2,000 people had been placed into permanent housing with support. Other programs initiated by Newsom to end chronic homelessness included the San Francisco Homeless Outreach Team (SF HOT) and Project Homeless Connect (PHC).

On October 27, 2004, during a strike by hotel workers on a dozen San Francisco hotels, Newsom joined UNITE HERE union members on a picket line in front of the Westin St. Francis Hotel. He vowed that the city would boycott the hotels by not sponsoring city events in any until the hotels agreed to a contract with workers. The contract dispute was settled in September 2006.<sup>[44]</sup>

In 2005, Newsom pushed for a state law to allow communities in California to create policy restricting certain breeds of dogs.<sup>[45]</sup>

He signed the law establishing Healthy San Francisco in 2007 to provide city residents with universal health care.

In 2009, Newsom came under attack from the San Francisco Democratic Party for his failure to implement the City of San Francisco's sanctuary city rule, under which the city was to not assist U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.<sup>[46]</sup>



Newsom at Stanford University in 2008



Gavin Newsom at the 2008 Web 2.0 Summit

The same year, Newsom received the Leadership for Healthy Communities Award, along with Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City and three other public officials, for his commitment to making healthful food and physical activity options more accessible to children and families.<sup>[47]</sup> In 2008, he had hosted the Urban Rural Roundtable to explore ways to promote regional food development and increased access to healthy affordable food,<sup>[48]</sup> and he secured \$8 million in federal and local funds for the Better Streets program,<sup>[49]</sup> which ensures that public health perspectives are fully integrated into urban planning processes. He signed a menu-labeling bill into law, requiring that chain restaurants print nutrition information on their menus.<sup>[50]</sup>

In 2010, Newsom was named "America's Most Social Mayor" by Samepoint, based on analysis of the social media profiles of mayors from the 100 largest cities in the United States.<sup>[51]</sup>



Gavin Newsom, San Francisco, 1999

## Same-sex marriage

In 2004, Newsom gained national attention when he directed the San Francisco city–county clerk to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, in violation of state law.<sup>[43]</sup> In August 2004, the Supreme Court of California annulled the marriages that Newsom had authorized, as they conflicted with state law. Still, Newsom's unexpected move brought national attention to the issues of gay marriage, solidifying political support for Newsom in San Francisco and in the LGBTQ+ community.<sup>[2][13][52]</sup>

During the 2008 election, Newsom was a prominent and vocal opponent of Proposition 8, the ballot initiative to reverse the California Supreme Court ruling that there was a constitutional right to same-sex marriage.<sup>[53]</sup> Proposition 8 supporters released a commercial featuring footage of Newsom saying the following in a speech regarding same-sex marriage: "This door's wide open now. It's going to happen, whether you like it or not."<sup>[54]</sup> Some observers noted that polls shifted in favor of Proposition 8 following the release of the commercial; this, in turn, led to speculation that Newsom had inadvertently played a role in the passage of the amendment.<sup>[54][55][56][57]</sup>

## Lieutenant Governor of California

In April 2009, Newsom announced his intention to run for Governor of California in the 2010 election. In September 2009, he received the endorsement of former president Bill Clinton. During the campaign, Newsom remarked that, if elected, he'd like to be referred to as "The Gavinator" (a reference to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's nickname, "The Governator"). Throughout the campaign, however, Newsom suffered low poll numbers, trailing Democratic frontrunner Jerry Brown by more than 20 points in most polls.<sup>[58][59][60][61][62][63]</sup> In October 2009, Newsom dropped out of the gubernatorial race.<sup>[64][65][66]</sup>



Gavin Newsom at a Jerry Brown campaign event, 2010

In February 2010, Newsom filed initial paperwork to run for lieutenant governor,<sup>[67]</sup> and officially announced his candidacy in March.<sup>[4]</sup> He received the Democratic nomination in June,<sup>[68]</sup> and won the election on November 2, 2010.<sup>[69]</sup> Newsom was sworn in as lieutenant governor on January 10, 2011. The one-week delay was to ensure that a successor as mayor of San Francisco was chosen before he left office. Edwin M. Lee, the city administrator, took office the day after Newsom was sworn in as lieutenant governor. In May 2012, he debuted on Current TV as the host of *The Gavin Newsom Show*. That same month, Newsom drew criticism for negative comments about Sacramento, referring to the state capital as "dull" and commenting that he was only there once a week, saying "there's no reason" to be there otherwise.<sup>[70]</sup>

On November 4, 2014, Newsom was re-elected as Lieutenant Governor of California, defeating Republican Ron Nehring with 57.2% of the vote. His second term began on January 5, 2015.<sup>[71]</sup>

## Technology in government

Newsom released his first book, *Citizenville: How to Take the Town Square Digital and Reinvent Government*, on February 7, 2013.<sup>[72][73]</sup> The book discusses the Gov 2.0 movement that is taking place across the United States. Following its release, Newsom began to work with the Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society at the University of California, Berkeley, on the California Report Card (CRC).<sup>[74]</sup> The CRC is a mobile-optimized platform that allows state residents to "grade" their state on six timely issues. The CRC exemplifies ideas presented in Newsom's *Citizenville*, encouraging direct public involvement in government affairs via technology.<sup>[75]</sup>

In 2015, Newsom partnered with the Institute for Advanced Technology and Public Policy at California Polytechnic State University to launch Digital Democracy, an online tool that uses facial and voice recognition to enable users to navigate California legislative proceedings.<sup>[76]</sup>

## Education

In November 2015, Newsom joined then-Long Beach City College Superintendent Eloy Oakley in an op-ed calling for the creation of the California College Promise, which would create partnerships between public schools, public universities, and employers and offer a free community college education.<sup>[77]</sup> Throughout 2016, he joined Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf at the launch of the Oakland Promise and then-Second Lady Jill Biden and L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti at the launch of the LA Promise.<sup>[78][79]</sup> In June 2016, the Lieutenant Governor helped secure \$15 million in the state budget to support the creation of promise programs throughout the state.<sup>[80]</sup>

In December 2015, Newsom called on the University of California to reclassify computer science courses as a core academic class in order to incentivize more high schools to offer computer science curriculum.<sup>[81][82]</sup> He sponsored successful legislation signed by Governor Brown in September 2016, that began the planning process for expanding computer science education to all state students, beginning as early as kindergarten.<sup>[83]</sup>

In 2016, the Lieutenant Governor passed a series of reforms at the University of California to provide student-athletes with additional academic and injury-related support, and to ensure that contracts for athletic directors and coaches emphasized academic progress. This came in response to several athletics programs, including the University of California – Berkeley's football team, which garnered the lowest graduation rates in the country.<sup>[84][85]</sup>



## Criminal justice and cannabis legalization

In 2014, Newsom was the only statewide politician to endorse California Proposition 47, a piece of legislation that recategorized certain non-violent offenses like drug and property crimes as misdemeanors as opposed to felonies. The measure was passed by voters in the state of California on November 4, 2014.<sup>[86]</sup>

In July 2015, Newsom released the final report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Marijuana Policy, which he had convened with the American Civil Liberties Union of California in 2013. The report's recommendations to regulate marijuana were intended to inform a legalization measure on the November 2016 ballot.<sup>[87]</sup> Newsom supported the resulting measure, Proposition 64, which legalized cannabis use and cultivation for California state residents who are 21 or older.<sup>[88]</sup>

In response to pro-enforcement statements made by Press Secretary Sean Spicer, Newsom sent a letter on February 24, 2017, to Attorney General Jeff Sessions and President Donald Trump, urging them not to increase federal enforcement against recreational cannabis firms opening up in California.<sup>[88]</sup> He wrote, "The government must not strip the legal and publicly supported industry of its business and hand it back to drug cartels and criminals ... Dealers don't card kids. I urge you and your administration to work in partnership with California and the other eight states that have legalized recreational marijuana for adult use in a way that will let us enforce our state laws that protect the public and our children while targeting the bad actors." Newsom responded to comments by Spicer which compared cannabis to opioids saying, "Unlike marijuana, opioids represent an addictive and harmful substance, and I would welcome your administration's focused efforts on tackling this particular public health crisis."<sup>[88]</sup>

## Capital punishment

Newsom supported a failed measure in 2012 that sought to end capital punishment in California. He claimed the initiative would save California millions of dollars, citing statistics that California had spent \$5 billion since 1978 to execute just 13 people.<sup>[89]</sup>

Newsom also supported failed Proposition 62 in 2016, which also would have repealed the death penalty in California.<sup>[86]</sup> He argued that Prop 62 would get rid of a system "that is administered with troubling racial disparities". He also stated that the death penalty was fundamentally immoral and did not deter crime.<sup>[89]</sup>

## Governor of California

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On February 11, 2015, Newsom announced that he was opening a campaign account for governor in the 2018 elections, allowing him to raise funds for a campaign to succeed Jerry Brown as Governor of California.<sup>[5]</sup> On June 5, 2018, he finished in the top two of the nonpartisan blanket primary, and defeated Republican John H. Cox by a landslide in the gubernatorial election on November 6.<sup>[6]</sup>

Newsom was sworn in on January 7, 2019.

## Capital punishment

On March 13, 2019, Newsom declared a moratorium on the state's death penalty, preventing any execution in the state as long as he remained governor. The move also led to the withdrawal of the state's current lethal injection protocol and the closure of the execution chamber at San Quentin State Prison.<sup>[90]</sup> In a *CBS This Morning* interview, Newsom said that the death penalty is "a racist system ... that is perpetuating inequality. It's a system that I cannot in good conscience support."<sup>[91]</sup> The moratorium grants a temporary reprieve for all of the 737 inmates on California's death row, which is the largest death row in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>[92]</sup>



Governor Newsom

## Clemency

In response to the Trump administration's crackdown on immigrants with criminal records, he has given heightened consideration to people in this situation.<sup>[93]</sup> A pardon can eliminate the grounds for deportation of immigrants who are legal permanent residents. Pardon requests from people facing deportation are provided with an expedited review by the state Board of Parole Hearings per a 2018 California law.<sup>[93]</sup> In his first acts of clemency as Governor, he pardoned seven formerly incarcerated people in May 2019, including two Cambodian refugees facing deportation.<sup>[94]</sup> He pardoned three men who were attempting to avoid being deported to Cambodia or Vietnam in November 2019. They had separately committed crimes when they were each 19 years old.<sup>[95]</sup> He granted parole to a Cambodian refugee in December 2019 who had been held in a California prison due to a murder case. Although immigrant rights groups wanted Newsom to end policies allowing the transfer to federal agents, he was turned over for possible deportation upon release.<sup>[96]</sup>



Dianne Feinstein with Gavin Newsom

## Environment

Newsom vetoed SB 1 in September 2019 which would have preserved environmental protections, of which the Trump administration were set to roll back by the government's relinquishment of endangered species protections.<sup>[97]</sup> The Newsom administration intends to sue federal agencies over the rollbacks to protect imperiled fish in the Sacramento–San Joaquin River Delta in 2019.<sup>[98]</sup>

He attended the 2019 UN Climate Action Summit where he spoke of California as a climate leader due to the actions of Republicans and Democrats who held the office before him.<sup>[99][97]</sup> In August 2020, Gavin Newsom addressed the 2020 Democratic National Convention. His speech made mentions of climate

change and the wildfires prevalent in California at the time.<sup>[100]</sup> At the same time, he has quietly approved more permits for oil and gas wells in the first half of the same year as compared to 2019, and he has not billed fossil fuel companies for the 107,000 wells in the state that need to be cleaned up.<sup>[101]</sup>

## Gun control

As Lieutenant Governor in 2016, he was the official proponent of Proposition 63. The ballot measure required a background check and California Department of Justice authorization to purchase ammunition among other gun control regulations. In response to the 2019 mass shooting in Virginia Beach, he called for nationwide background checks on people purchasing ammunition.<sup>[102]</sup> Later that year, he responded to the Gilroy Garlic Festival shooting with, "Tonight, CA stands with the Gilroy community." "Grateful for the law enforcement's efforts and their continues work as this situation develops."<sup>[103]</sup> He visited with survivors and the families of victims. While stating his support for the 2nd Amendment, he said he would like national cooperation controlling "weapons of goddamned mass destruction".<sup>[104]</sup> He also commented that "These shootings overwhelmingly, almost exclusively, are males, boys, 'men' — I put in loose quotes, I do think that is missing in the national conversation."<sup>[105]</sup>

## Healthcare

Reducing the cost of healthcare and increasing access in California were priorities he campaigned on. He also supported creating a universal healthcare system in California.<sup>[106]</sup> The budget passed in June 2019 addressed these priorities by expanding eligibility for Medi-Cal to undocumented youth ages 19 to 25. The state's health program for the poor already includes eligibility for those 18 and younger but California will become the first state to expand eligibility to undocumented young adults.<sup>[106]</sup> Seniors who live in the state without legal immigration status may also be allowed to enroll, either by inclusion in the state budget or with Newsom's signature on legislation.<sup>[107]</sup>

## COVID-19 pandemic

Newsom declared a state of emergency on March 4, 2020, after the first death in California attributable to coronavirus disease (COVID-19).<sup>[108][109]</sup> His stated intention was to help California prepare for and contain the spread of the COVID-19.<sup>[110]</sup> The emergency declaration allows state agencies to more easily procure equipment and services, share information on patients and alleviates restrictions on the use of state-owned properties and facilities. Newsom also announced that mitigation policies for the state's estimated 108,000 unsheltered homeless people would be prioritized with a significant push to move them indoors.<sup>[111]</sup>

Newsom issued an executive order that allows the state to commandeer hotels and medical facilities to treat COVID-19 patients, and permits government officials to hold teleconferences in private without violating open meeting laws.<sup>[112]</sup> He also directed local school districts to make their own decisions on school closures, but used an executive order to ensure students' needs are met whether or not their school is physically open. A request by the Newsom administration was approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to offer meal service during school closures which included families being able to pick up those meals at libraries, parks or other off-campus locations. Roughly 80% of students at California's public schools receive free or reduced-price meals. This executive order included continued funding for remote learning opportunities and child care options during workday hours.<sup>[113]</sup>

As the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the state continued to rise, on March 15 he urged people 65 and older and those with chronic health conditions to isolate themselves from others. He also called on bars, and brewery and winery tasting rooms statewide, to close their doors to patrons. Some local jurisdictions had mandatory closures.<sup>[114]</sup> The closures were extended to movie theaters and health clubs. He asked restaurants to stop serving meals inside their establishments and offer take-out meals only.<sup>[115]</sup> His statewide order to stay at home became mandatory on March 19. While it allowed movement outside the home for necessities or recreation, people were required to maintain a safe distance apart.<sup>[116]</sup> Activity "needed to maintain continuity of operation of the federal critical infrastructure sectors, critical government services, schools, childcare, and construction" were excluded from the order. Essential services such as grocery stores and pharmacies remained open. Newsom provided state funds to pay for protective measures such as hotel room lodging for hospital and other essential workers fearing returning home and infecting family members.<sup>[117]</sup> By April 26, he had issued thirty executive orders under the state of emergency while the legislature has not been not in session.<sup>[118]</sup>

He announced on April 28, along with the governors of Oregon and Washington, a shared vision for reopening their economies.<sup>[119][120]</sup> His administration outlined key indicators for altering his stay-at-home mandate including:<sup>[121]</sup>

- the ability to closely monitor and track potential cases
- prevent infection of high-risk people
- increase surge capacity at hospitals
- develop therapeutics
- ensure physical distancing at schools, businesses and child-care facilities
- develop guidelines for restoring isolation orders if the virus surges

Reopening the economy was described as having four stages.<sup>[122]</sup> Newsom emphasized that easing restrictions will be based on data, not dates, stating "We will base reopening plans on facts and data, not on ideology. Not what we want. Not what we hope."<sup>[123]</sup> Regarding a return of Major League Baseball and the NFL, he said, "I would move very cautiously in that expectation."<sup>[124]</sup>

In early May as he announced that certain retailers could reopen for pickup, the majority of Californians approved of the governor's handling of the crisis, and are more concerned about reopening too early than too late. There have been demonstrations and protests of these policies.<sup>[125]</sup> Under pressure, Newsom delegated more decision-making for reopening down to the local level.<sup>[126]</sup>

In May Newsom announced a plan for registered voters to have the option of voting by mail in the November election.<sup>[127]</sup> California was the first state in the country to commit to sending mail-in ballots to all registered voters for the November election.<sup>[128]</sup>

As the state opened up, an analysis by Los Angeles Times found that new coronavirus hospitalizations in California began accelerating around June 15 at a rate not seen since early April, immediately after the coronavirus began rapidly spreading throughout the state.<sup>[129]</sup> On June 18, he made face-coverings mandatory for all Californians in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19.<sup>[130][131]</sup> Enforcement would be up to business owners, as local law enforcement agencies view non-compliance as a minor infraction.<sup>[132]</sup> By the end of June, he had ordered seven counties to close bars and nightspots, and recommended eight other counties take action on their own to close those businesses, due to a surge of coronavirus cases in some parts of the state.<sup>[133]</sup> In a regular press conference on July 13 as he was ordering the reinstatement of the shutdown of bars and indoor dining in restaurants, he said, "We're



seeing an increase in the spread of the virus, so that's why it's incumbent upon all of us to recognize soberly that COVID-19 is not going away any time soon until there is a vaccine or an effective therapy".<sup>[129]</sup>

## High-speed rail

In his February 2019 State of the State address, Newsom announced that, while work would continue on the 171-mile (275 km)<sup>[134]</sup> Central Valley segment from Bakersfield to Merced, the rest of the system would be indefinitely postponed, citing cost overruns and delays.<sup>[135]</sup> This and other actions created tension with the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California, a labor union representing 450,000 members.<sup>[136]</sup>

## Homelessness and housing shortage

A poll found that California voters thought the most important issue for the governor and state Legislature to work on in 2020 was homelessness.<sup>[137]</sup> In his first week of office, Newsom threatened to withhold state funding for infrastructure to communities that failed to take actions to alleviate California's housing shortage.<sup>[138][139]</sup> In late January 2019, he announced that he would sue Huntington Beach for preventing the construction of affordable housing.<sup>[140]</sup> A year later, the city acted to settle the lawsuit by the state.<sup>[141]</sup> Newsom has been characterized as an opponent of NIMBY (not-in-my-back-yard) sentiment.<sup>[142][143][144][145][146]</sup>

## Hydraulic fracturing

Newsom pledged during his campaign to tighten state oversight of fracking and oil extraction.<sup>[147]</sup> He imposed a moratorium in November 2019 on approval of new hydraulic fracturing and steam-injected oil drilling in the state until the permits for those projects can be reviewed by an independent panel of scientists.<sup>[148]</sup>

## Native American genocide

In a speech before representatives of Native Americans in June 2019, Newsom apologized for the genocide of Native Americans approved and abetted by the California state government upon statehood in the late 19th century. By one estimate, at least 4,500 Californian Indians were killed between 1849 and 1870.<sup>[149]</sup> Newsom said, "That's what it was, a genocide. No other way to describe it. And that's the way it needs to be described in the history books."<sup>[150]</sup>

## Personal travel

He chose El Salvador as his first international trip as governor.<sup>[151]</sup> With nearly 680,000 Salvadoran immigrants living in California, he felt that the "state's relationship with Central America is key to California's future".<sup>[152]</sup> He was also concerned about the tens of thousands of Salvadorans that were fleeing the smallest country in Central America for the U.S. each year.<sup>[153]</sup> As governor of a state impacted by the debate of illegal immigration, he went to see first-hand the factors driving it and to build business and tourism partnerships between California and Central America. He said he wanted to "ignite a more enlightened engagement and dialogue."<sup>[154]</sup>

## Water management

Newsom supports a series of tentative water-sharing agreements that would bring an end to the dispute between farmers, cities, fishermen and environmentalists over how much water should be left the state's two most important rivers, the Sacramento and San Joaquin, which flow into the Delta.<sup>[155]</sup>

## Endorsement of Joe Biden

Newsom formally endorsed Joe Biden in May, 2020 praising the former vice president for his “deep compassion and empathy” during a virtual high-dollar fundraiser in partnership with the Democratic National Committee.<sup>[156]</sup>

## Police relations

Gov. Newsom has sympathized with activists who denounce police brutality, and believes police should be held accountable. He has spoken in favor of Assembly Bill 1196, which would ban carotid artery restraints and choke holds in California. He has claimed that there is no longer a place for a policing tactic “that literally is designed to stop people’s blood from flowing into their brain, that has no place any longer in 21st century practices.”<sup>[157][158]</sup>

## Electoral history

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## Personal life

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Newsom with then-fiancée Jennifer Siebel at the 2008 San Francisco Pride parade

Newsom was baptized and raised in his father's Catholic faith. He describes himself as an "Irish Catholic rebel [...] in some respects, but one that still has tremendous admiration for the Church and very strong faith". When asked about the current state of the Catholic Church, he said the church was in crisis.<sup>[15]</sup> He said he stays with the Church because of his "strong connection to a greater purpose, and [...] higher being [...]" Newsom identifies himself as a practicing Catholic,<sup>[159]</sup> stating that he has a "strong sense of faith that is perennial: day in and day out".<sup>[15]</sup> He is the godfather of designer and model Nats Getty.<sup>[160]</sup>

In December 2001, Newsom married Kimberly Guilfoyle, a former San Francisco prosecutor and legal commentator for Court TV, CNN, and MSNBC who later became a prominent personality on Fox News Channel. The couple married at Saint Ignatius Catholic

Church on the campus of the University of San Francisco, where Guilfoyle attended law school. The couple appeared in the September 2004 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*; the spread had them posed at the Getty Villa with the title the "New Kennedys".<sup>[2][161]</sup> In January 2005, they jointly filed for divorce, citing "difficulties due to their careers on opposite coasts".<sup>[162]</sup> Their divorce was finalized on February 28, 2006.<sup>[163]</sup>

In 2005, Newsom was selected as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum.<sup>[164]</sup>

In January 2007, it was revealed that he had had a romantic relationship in mid-2005 with Ruby Rippey-Tourk, the wife of his then-campaign manager and former deputy chief of staff, Alex Tourk.<sup>[165][166]</sup> Tourk filed for divorce shortly after the revelation and left Newsom's campaign and administration.

In September 2006, Newsom began dating film director Jennifer Siebel. In February 2007, he announced he would seek treatment for alcohol abuse.<sup>[167]</sup> In December 2007, the couple announced their engagement,<sup>[168][169]</sup> and they were married in Stevensville, Montana in July 2008.<sup>[170]</sup> In September 2009, Siebel gave birth to a girl, Montana Tessa Newsom.<sup>[171]</sup> She gave birth to a son, Hunter Siebel Newsom, on June 12, 2011, their daughter Brooklynn on July 3, 2013,<sup>[172]</sup> and on February 26, 2016, the Newsoms announced the birth of second son, Dutch.<sup>[173]</sup>

In 2012, Newsom and his family moved out of San Francisco and into a house they bought in Kentfield in Marin County.<sup>[174]</sup>

After his election as governor, Newsom and his family moved into the Governor's Mansion in Downtown Sacramento and thereafter settled in Fair Oaks, California.<sup>[175]</sup>

## See also

- Electoral history of Gavin Newsom

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## Further reading

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- Tad Friend, "Golden Boy 2.0: Gavin Newsom's early promise fizzled. Now he's poised to be California's governor", *The New Yorker*, November 5, 2018, pp. 18–26.

## External links

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- Office of Governor Gavin Newsom (<https://www.gov.ca.gov>)
- Newsom's official campaign website (<http://www.gavinnewsom.com/>)
- CityMayors profile about Gavin Newsom ([http://www.citymayors.com/mayors/sanfrancisco\\_mayor.html](http://www.citymayors.com/mayors/sanfrancisco_mayor.html))
- Gavin Newsom debates Maggie Gallagher on gay marriage (<https://www.pbs.org/now/shows/521/gay-marriage-debate.html>) in a May 2009 interactive debate from NOW on PBS Online
- Profile (<https://www.votesmart.org/candidate/70386>) at Vote Smart

- [Appearances \(https://www.c-span.org/person/?gavinnewsom\)](https://www.c-span.org/person/?gavinnewsom) on [C-SPAN](#)

### Political offices

Preceded by <b><u>Kevin Shelley</u></b>	<b><u>Member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors</u></b> from the 2nd district 1997–2004	Succeeded by <b><u>Michela Alioto-Pier</u></b>
Preceded by <b><u>Willie Brown</u></b>	<b><u>Mayor of San Francisco</u></b> 2004–2011	Succeeded by <b><u>Ed Lee</u></b>
Preceded by <b><u>Abel Maldonado</u></b>	<b><u>Lieutenant Governor of California</u></b> 2011–2019	Succeeded by <b><u>Eleni Kounalakis</u></b>
Preceded by <b><u>Jerry Brown</u></b>	<b><u>Governor of California</u></b> 2019–present	<b>Incumbent</b>

### Party political offices

Preceded by <b><u>John Garamendi</u></b>	<b><u>Democratic nominee for Lieutenant Governor of California</u></b> 2010, 2014	Succeeded by <b><u>Eleni Kounalakis</u></b>
Preceded by <b><u>Jerry Brown</u></b>	<b><u>Democratic nominee for Governor of California</u></b> 2018	<b>Most recent</b>

### U.S. order of precedence (ceremonial)

Preceded by <b><u>Mike Pence</u></b> <i>as <u>Vice President</u></i>	<b><u>Order of Precedence of the United States</u></b> Within California	Succeeded by <b><u>Mayor of city</u></b> in which event is held
		Succeeded by <b><u>Otherwise Nancy Pelosi</u></b> <i>as <u>Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives</u></i>
Preceded by <b><u>Tony Evers</u></b> <i>as <u>Governor of Wisconsin</u></i>	<b><u>Order of Precedence of the United States</u></b> Outside California	Succeeded by <b><u>Tim Walz</u></b> <i>as <u>Governor of Minnesota</u></i>

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